

Area officials haggle over M-275 freeway alternatives

By TIM RICHARD

Oakland County and local officials are gearing to tell the State Highway Commission it will cost more dollars and have a more severe effect on the ecosystem to build the alternatives to M-275 than it would have cost to go through with the north-south freeway.

But first they will have to reach their own internal disagreement over whether to get the four-member highway commission to reverse its Jan. 26 cancellation of the western Oakland project.

On one hand, County Executive Daniel T. Murphy, speaking through deputy Patrick Nowak, contends "we are not resisting the State Highway Commission decision. We accept the fact it will not be built. But the problem is there today, and they will be there tomorrow."

On the other hand, the Oakland County Road Commission and such local figures as West Bloomfield Township Supervisor John Doherty and White Lake Supervisor James Reid,

contend that nothing but M-275 makes any sense.

THEY MET for nearly two hours last week, with road commission Managing Director John Grubba doing most of the talking.

They asked Murphy to call them together early next month so that local officials and planners can tell how cancellation of M-275 will affect their communities, and they plan a final meeting in mid-April to come up with a unified position.

The state highway commission has promised to make its April 27 meeting an Oakland County hearing on the impact of cancellation of M-275 as well as to the question of whether North-western Highway should be extended.

Nowak, speaking for the county executive, focused on what will be done with the state's construction funds if they aren't spent on M-275.

"If of Haggerty Road right now is carrying 15,000 to 16,000 vehicles a day, three times the traffic of I-75 north of Indian River," Nowak said.

Orchard Lake Road, with 30,000 ve-

hicles daily on a five-lane county road, and the four-lane M-59 with 23,000 to 28,000 vehicles daily, are doing the work of freeways, Nowak said.

He said Oakland should make sure M-275 funds are spent to relieve the problems M-275 would have relieved, and not be dissipated to the other 82 counties of the state.

ONE KEY proposal from the road commission was an alternate north-south state trunkline in place of M-275. It would follow the route of Haggerty Road (the western boundary of Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield) to Commerce Road, Bogie Lake Road, M-59, Ormond Road and Dabrowski Road, then overland to the interchange of I-75 and Holly Road.

Attached to that was a proposal to extend Northwestern Highway from its present stopping point at Orchard Lake Road to Maple Road, then follow Maple to the Haggerty highway. Doherty, as West Bloomfield supervisor, said "the environmental impact would be horrendous on Maple Road."

which goes through residential and rural land. "Our ability to control growth there is zero."

Doherty pointed out that the road commission's proposed trunkline alignment would pass between Lower Straits and Middle Straits lakes in Commerce Township. "The space between these lakes is not as wide as this room," Doherty said. "A trunkline would ruin those lakes."

BUT, THAT, apparently, was just the reaction Grubba and the road commission were looking for.

They contend it would be worse not to build the highway. "Our initial findings indicate the urgent need for the construction of M-275 as proposed by the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation," his report said.

While Doherty was looking at land use and environment, others were looking at economics. Grubba stirred strong feelings when he said it would cost \$490 million for all the alternatives, versus trunkline county roads and reversed park developments while it would cost only \$165 million to build M-275 and its related improvements.

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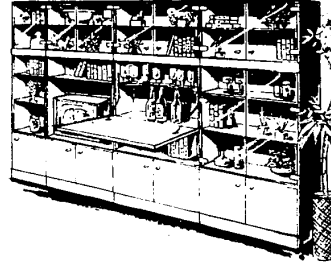
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Is future limited for suburban hizzoners?

You won't find the likes of the late Mayor Richard J. Daley in the suburbs.

The suburban mayor is seldom a power figure, a University of Michigan study reveals, and the position is rarely a stepping stone to higher office.

The authority it bears varies both with the community's government system and the personality of the person in office. Typically, however, it is a part-time job with a nominal salary, limited formal powers and no future.

U-M social work Prof. Milan J. Duhly undertook the study of suburban mayors to shed light on the workings of their municipal governments and the process of suburbanization in general. His investigation focused on the mayors of eight metropolitan Detroit suburbs, including Livonia, Plymouth, Southfield, Troy and Westland.

"Ninety-five per cent of the nation's metropolitan population growth from 1960-70 occurred outside the central cities," reports Duhly, who is currently on leave from the U-M and the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

"The national trend paralleled that of Detroit, where the city grew each decade until 1950 and then began a steady decline. The city accounted for 61 per cent of the metropolitan Detroit population in 1950 and 36 per cent by 1970.

These demographic trends are generally well known," Duhly says, "but less is understood about how suburbanization takes place and what kinds of political structures and leadership patterns have developed to deal with it."

Of the 48 incorporated municipalities with populations over 10,000 in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb coun-

ties in 1976, 35 per cent had a mayor-council form of government and 65 per cent had a council-manager form. Nationally, 45 per cent of the municipalities have mayor-council forms, 49 per cent have council-managers, and six per cent use a commission form of government.

"The mayors in the council-manager form of government are likely to have few formal powers," Duhly found. "For example, they will seldom have responsibility for preparing the budget, extensive appointment powers or a veto over the actions of city councils. The median salary for mayors in the 31 council-manager governments in metropolitan Detroit was \$1,000 per year."

Within the mayor-council government category, the U-M social worker distinguishes between the "strong mayor-weak council" and "weak mayor-strong council" governments. Strong mayors are considered to be full-time officials with a wide range of veto, appointment and budget powers and salaries often ranging from \$30,000 to \$50,000 per year. The weak mayors have part-time duties and salaries more similar to those in the council-manager governments.

One of the most striking characteristics of the suburban mayoral seat is its short tenure. Within the 48 municipalities in metropolitan Detroit between 1954 and 1976, the average term of the mayors was 3.8 years, Duhly found. This figure varied little when he compared old and new communities.

The main reasons for this short tenure, he estimates, are the part-time nature of most of the offices, the nominal salary, lack of formal powers, and difficulties in gaining the political visibility which could lead to higher posts.

Duhly found that the eight mayors he studied in detail fell into five behavior categories which had been defined by John Kotter and Paul Lawrence in their book, "Mayors in Action: Five Approaches to Urban Governance." They are:

• Ceremonial—A mayoralist's part-time mayor with little formal power or direct impact on the city government.

• Caretaker—Full or part-time, a non-innovator who works quietly within the city bureaucracy to maintain traditional services.

• Personality-Individualist—A more aggressive version of the ceremonial mayor, charismatic but unpredictable.

This type becomes actively involved only with issues that personally interest him.

• Executive—An activist who works resourcefully to implement projects and make changes. More than the caretaker, the executive also builds personal contacts throughout the community.

• Program Entrepreneur—Highly visible, aggressive and involved, this mayor initiates ideas, controls the bureaucracy and accomplishes a wide variety of tasks.

"The opportunity for leadership seems to be contingent on the governmental systems within which the mayors operate," Duhly concludes.

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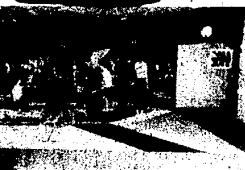
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